

CHANDAMAMA

JUNE 1992

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Palace"

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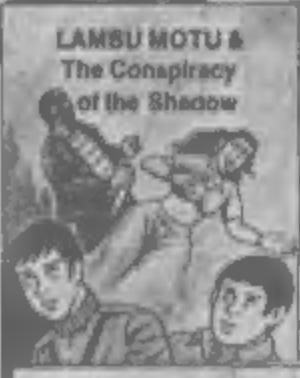
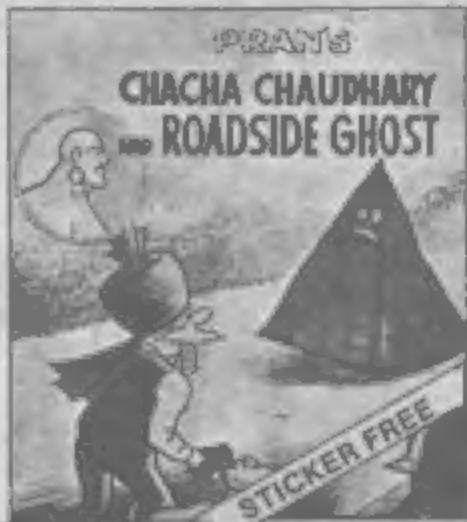
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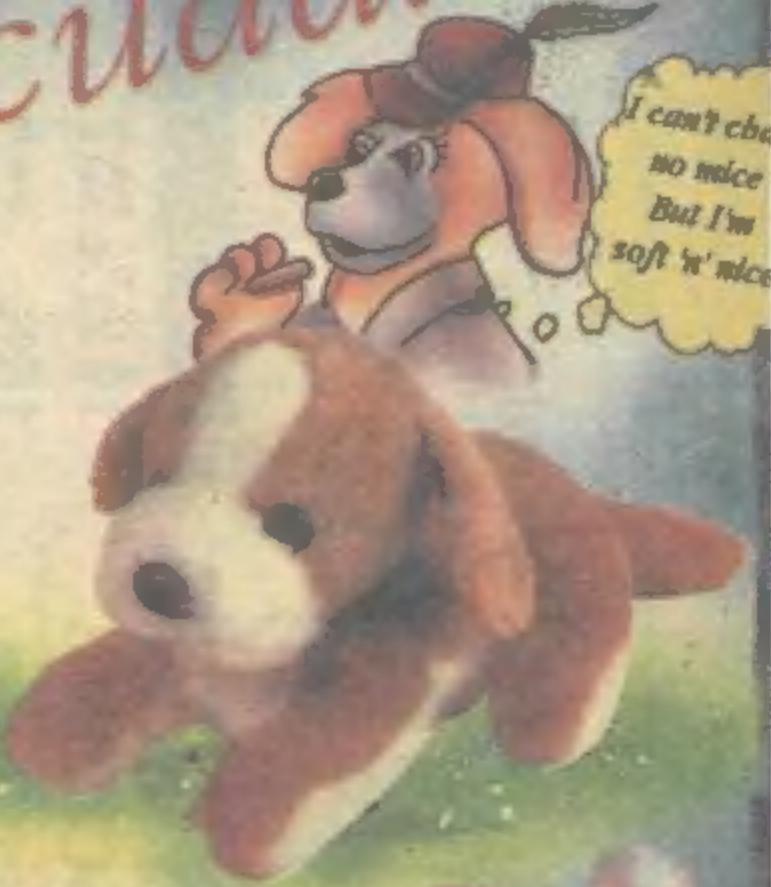
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CHANDAMAMA

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And News Flash, Let Us Know
and More!

NEXT ISSUE

Vol. 22 JULY 1992 No. 1

THE MAGIC PALACE: It is now almost certain that Princess Vidyavati has been kidnapped. King Veerasen summons the court to seek everybody's advice. Commander-in-chief Ugra Sen initiates action to find the missing princess. On hearing the news, Acharya Vachaspati rushes to the palace. True, he had suggested a change of residence for Vidyavati, but had not foreseen a second change for her so soon. He waits for Acharya Jagatpati for consultation. Unlike his usual practice, Jagatpati is not seen around. Where has he disappeared?

VEER HANUMAN: Ravana once again approaches Sita Devi and informs her of the death of Rama and produces a head and a bow claiming them to be of her husband. Sita hesitates to believe him and wants him to show her the full body. The deception is shortlived when a soldier rushes in and tells Ravana that his presence is required to plan the strategy to defend Lanka from Rama.

PLUS the evergreen PANCHATANTRA stories in comics, CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT, and other regular features.

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Controlling Editor.
NAGI REDDI

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TOWARDS PRESERVING EARTH

People everywhere are keenly looking forward to the deliberations at the Earth Summit scheduled to be held in Rio de Janeiro early in June and the decisions this momentous meeting is expected to take to preserve our planet. In every sense, it will be a summit, as the meet will witness the participation of world leaders from all corners of the globe.

We have recently been coming across in the media expressions like 'global warming,' 'greenhouse gas emissions', 'ozone holes', and 'climate change'. Though they carry different meanings, they all point to one portent: the earth is dying and will soon disintegrate if the present generation and the coming one also do not take immediate and long term action respectively to protect and preserve the earth.

Our life depends on maintaining a balance in nature which, in the immediate past several years, was being threatened by indiscriminate denudation of forests. Plants and trees were being felled without an attempt to grow new trees in their place. People are being told these days to think of 'compensatory afforestation'—planting *two* saplings where *one* tree has been cut.

Certainly a proposition not difficult to implement. And if people plant trees in memory of their dear ones, this exercise can assume a sublime, sentimental purpose as well. The U.P. Government seems to have launched a scheme to promote "Smriti Vana" and create what are called neighbourhood forests.

Here's a novel idea that should catch everybody's attention.





On April 27, the Yugoslav Federal Parliament held a ceremonial session, when a new constitution was proclaimed in the presence of the representatives of almost 50 nations of the world, including India.

The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia now comprises only two of the six republics which had made up the Federation. The two republics are Serbia and Montenegro. Croatia and Slovenia seceded from the Federation last year, resulting in ethnic violence that lasted more than six months. Several people in Croatia were killed, many were rendered homeless, and many fled to neighbouring republics.

On the intervention of the Euro-

A New State, an Old Name

pean Community, peace accords were signed nearly 15 times, only to be violated within days, if not hours. Ultimately, the United Nations agreed to send a peace-keeping force to the strife-torn republics. Early in March, Lt. General Satish Nambiar of India reached Yugoslavia to head the U.N. Protection Force of 14,000 soldiers drawn from nearly 17 countries.

Meanwhile, the Muslim-dominated Bosnia-Herzegovina held a referendum in which people voted in favour of sovereignty for Bosnia, much to the discomfiture of Herzegovina, causing frequent clashes between Muslims and Croats on one side and the Serb population on the other. The U.N. has, however, categorically stated that its peace-keeping efforts cannot be extended to Bosnia for the time being.

The sixth republic, Macedonia, too, had announced its decision to secede and, along with Croatia, Slovenia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, is awaiting recognition by the European Community.

The present 2-state Federal Republic is the "third" Yugoslavia



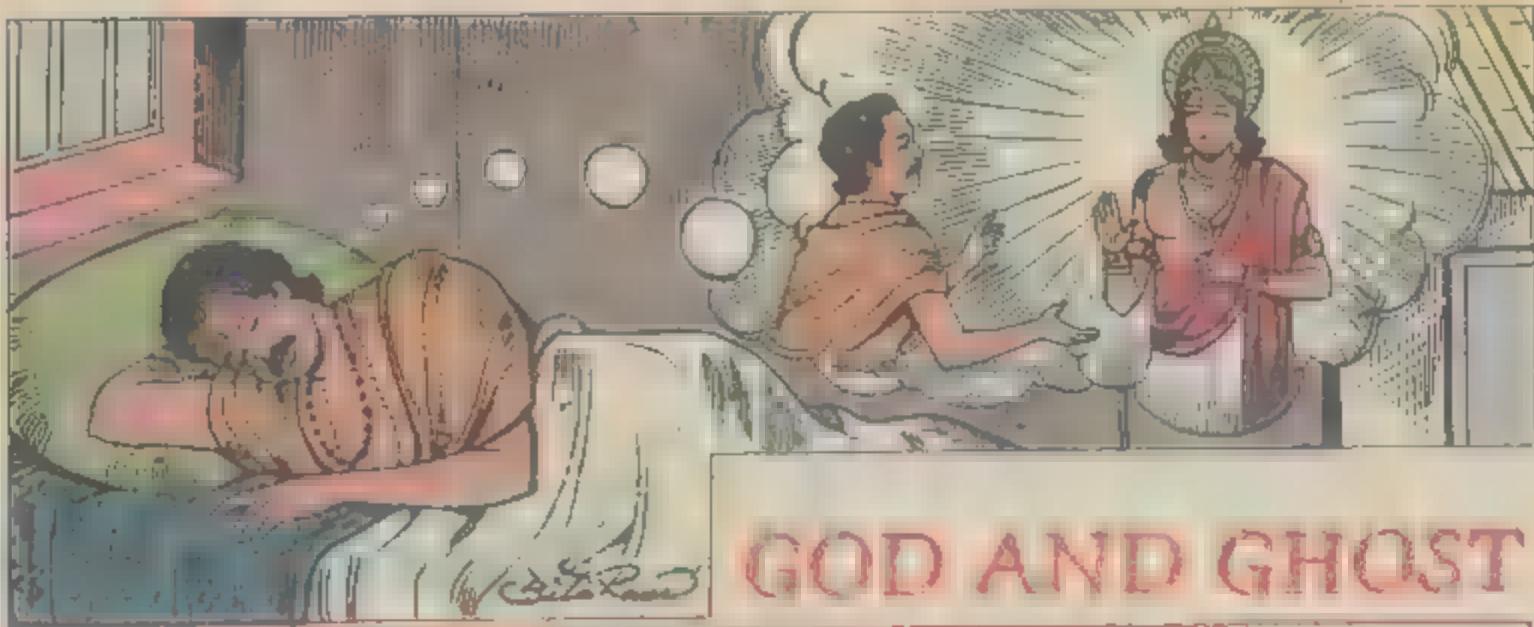
in the 20th century. According to the Pact of Corfu in 1917 (during the First World War 1914-18), all Yugoslavs were to unite after the War to form the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes. This was proclaimed on Dec. 1, 1918. The name was changed to Yugoslavia in 1929. In 1941, two years after the Second World War broke out, Germany under Hitler invaded Yugoslavia, which was liberated by Marshal Tito who then formed a Communist Federal Republic. He became the Prime Minister and was later made President in 1953. In 1974, the country adopted a new constitution, with the six republics

constituting a Socialist Federation, but after the death of Tito in 1980, the country was beset with uncertainty marked by regional tensions and economic difficulties. This saw the rise in power of the armed forces, which began intervening in all ethnic conflicts giving them the tinge of a civil war.

The two republics of Serbia and Montenegro account for 44 per cent of the population and 50 per cent of the natural resources of the former Federation. The new state, therefore, has considerable economic potential.

The eyes of the world are now on Yugoslavia and the prospects of permanent peace there.





GOD AND GHOST

Sunder was a very pious person. Early morning, soon after waking up, he would spend some time in worship, and before going to bed, he meditated for a while. All this became a regular habit with him. One night, the Lord appeared in his dream. "You're my sincere devotee, and I'm pleased with you. What boon will you wish for?"

"O Lord!" Sunder replied. "I only wish that my neighbour, Manu, became religious like me. Unfortunately, he doesn't have any faith in God."

"All right," the Lord agreed. "But it'll be your responsibility to convert him. I shall endow you with some powers."

The next morning, after attending to his puja, Sunder went over to Manu. "The Almighty appeared last night in my dream and asked me to give

you all advice. You must worship God everyday. Otherwise, the mango tree at the back of your house will be reduced to ashes."

"Let it happen, I'm not afraid," retorted Manu angrily. "Even if that happens, I won't worship God."

No sooner had he said this than Manu's wife ran up to them. "The mango tree is just one heap of ash!"

Manu got the shock of his life. Sunder stared at him for a while and then went back home.

That night, Manu went up to the huge banyan tree in the village and addressed the ghost which had taken his abode on the tree. "Oh! my saviour! You had come to my rescue several times before. I very much need your help now." He then told the spirit all that had happened.

"Don't worry. Be brave and

keep calm," the ghost consoled him. "By the time you reach home, Sunder's house too would have come down!"

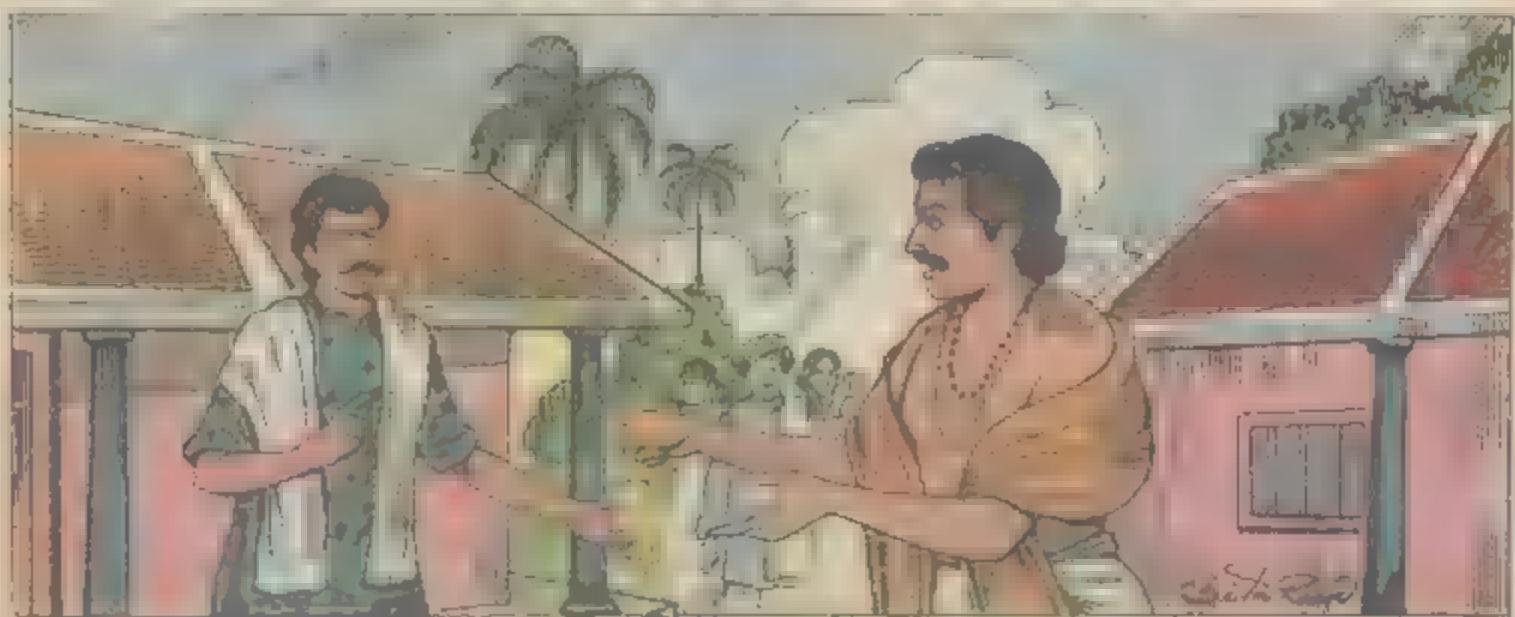
Even before he went up to his house could Manu see that Sunder's house had collapsed like a pack of cards. Somehow Sunder came to know it was the mischief of the ghost befriended by Manu. With the powers at his command, he wished a similar curse fell upon Manu's house.

Now both Sunder and Manu had to take refuge in the street. It was then that they both realised the folly of their actions. Sunder glared at Manu. "You sought the help of the ghost to destroy my house. Because of him, I've been driven to the street. I shall tell everybody about your friendship with the ghost and see that you're driven away from here!"

"It was only today that I really sought the help of the ghost," said Manu. "You pray to God everyday, while I beseech the ghost. I don't think there's much difference between God and ghost. You're harassing others in the name of God. Where do poor people like me turn to except ghosts?"

Sunder pondered the logic behind Manu's argument. "I think there's some truth in what you say. I know you haven't done any harm to anyone so far. What do I gain by converting you to be a god-fearing person? I tried that, and don't I know what came out of it? I had no business to have done this to you. I'm really sorry, my friend."

That night, God set right Manu's house, and persuaded the ghost to do the same with Sunder's house.



VISHNU SHARMA CON-
CLUDES "MITRABHEDA".
THE FIRST PART OF PAN-
CHATANTRA, THUS...

DEAR PRINCES, THAT
WAS HOW THE THOUGHT-
LESS KING ■■■ RUINED
BY THE GREEDY AND
SCHEMING COUNSELLOR.



A KING MAY LISTEN TO HIS ADVISERS, BUT LIKE A WISE MAN...



HE MUST DECIDE FOR
HIMSELF WHAT'S GOOD
OR BAD.



WOULD YOU NOW LIKE
TO HEAR "MITRALABHA",
WHICH TEACHES YOU
STATECRAFT ■ WISE
LIVING?



WE'LL BE DELIGHTED
SIR!



"MITRALABHA" IS THE
STORY OF FOUR WISE
LEARNED FRIENDS...



A CROW, A MOUSE, A
TURTLE, AND A DEER.



WHO, REMAINING TOGETHER, OVERCAME ALL DIFFICULTIES.

PLEASE TELL US
THEIR STORY!

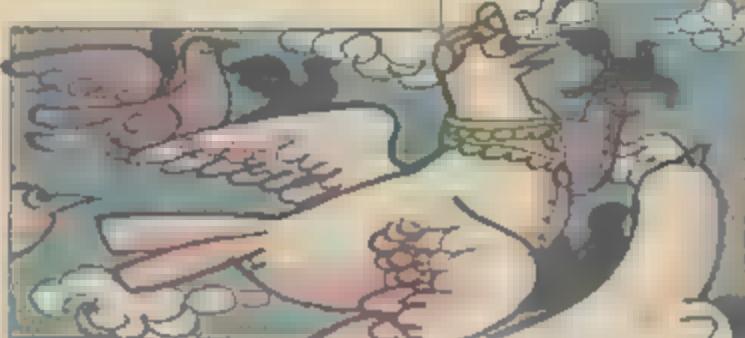


WHO IS HE?... MY GOD! A
HUNTER!

सूलभाः पुरुषा राजन् सततं प्रियवादिनः ।
अप्रियस्य च पर्यस्य वक्ता श्रोता च दुर्लभः ॥



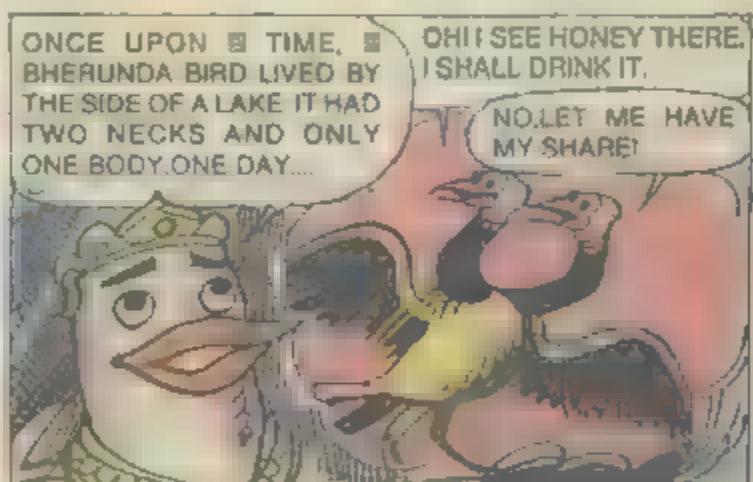
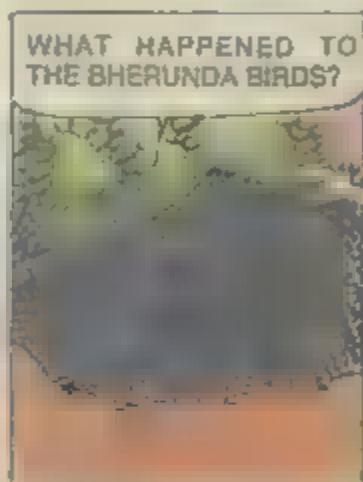
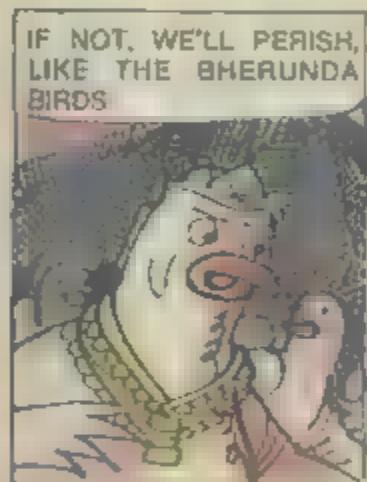
AFTER SOME TIME.... CHITRAGRIVA, THE KING OF DOVES, AND HIS FOLLOWERS COME THAT WAY.



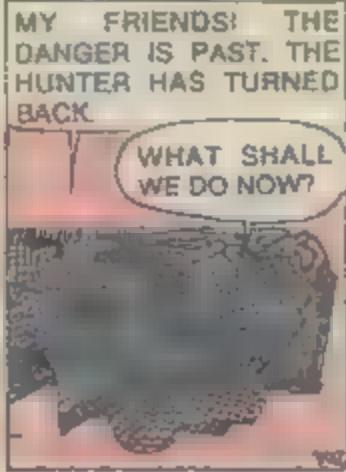
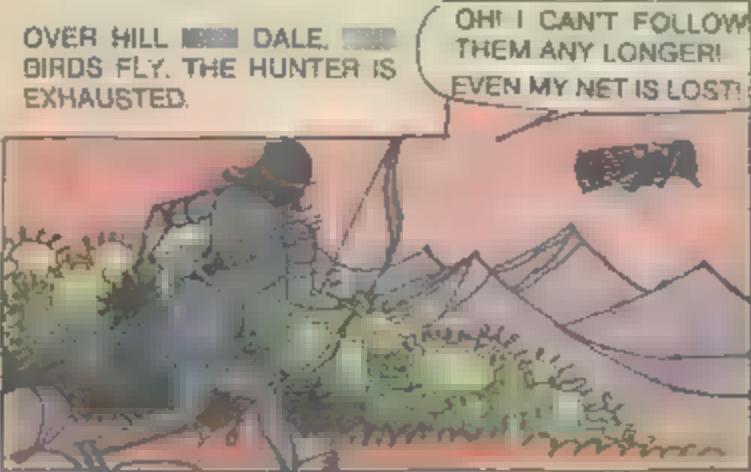
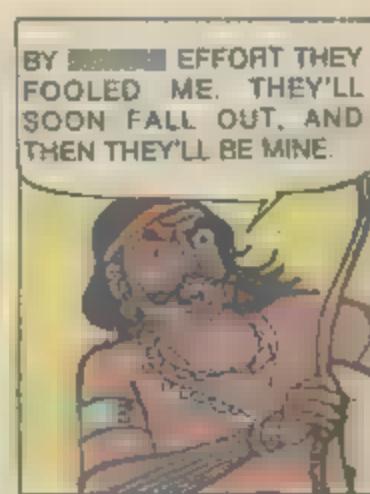
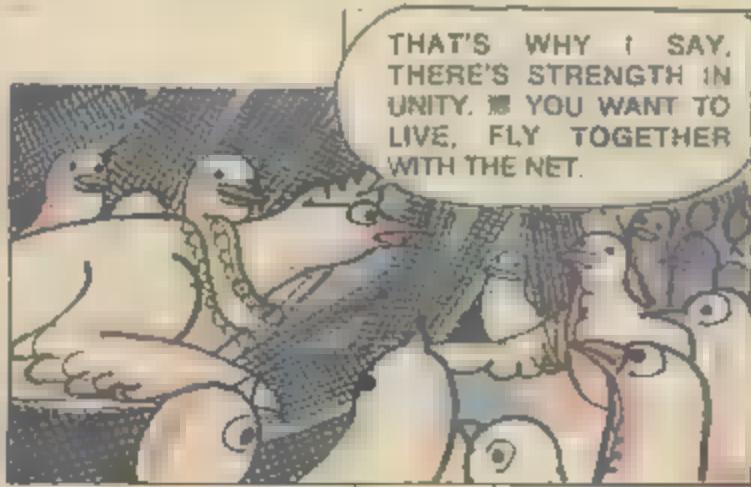
THE UNFORTUNATE DOVES COME DOWN FOR THE GRAINS AND ARE CAUGHT IN THE NET SPREAD BY THE HUNTER.



It is easy to come across people who always speak pleasingly, but rarely does one meet people who can speak and bear with unpalatable truths.



मुख्यं शोभते तावत् समायां वस्त्रवेष्टिः ।
तावच्यं शोभते मूर्खो यावत् किञ्चिन्म भाषते ॥



To Continue

The fool too can shine in an assembly if dressed in a dignified fashion—but he does so only till he has opened his mouth!

Shooting down problems

Who is a trouble-shooter? asks *Pramila Desai of Ahmedabad*. She had some problem in her school, and her classmate mentioned the name of a common friend and said, "He's a trouble-shooter, you must meet him." In factories and other places, where machines are employed, there will invariably be a person (we can call him a master mechanic) who is able to trace the fault in a machine whenever there is a breakdown and set it right. He is the trouble-shooter—someone who shoots down (removes) a trouble. The expression has now assumed a wider meaning, to include someone who acts as a sort of mediator in diplomatic, industrial, or other types of disputes, or who generally sorts out problems.



The College Union elections had just concluded. *Selvaraj, (of Gobichettipalayam)*, who had every hope of winning the post of President, lost by a margin of 21 votes to *Padmavathi*. He overheard one of the junior lecturers say that he (Selvaraj) was *pipped at the post*. When the votes were being counted, both he and Padmavathi were running a neck-and-neck race. At one stage Selvaraj had a lead of hundred votes, which was soon wiped off by his senior, Padmavathi, who established a lead of just 60 votes. The votes from only two more classes remained to be counted, and after those from one class were taken into account, Selvaraj appeared to be inches ahead of his rival. The last class happened to be a girls section, and Padmavati collected a major chunk (naturally!) to defeat Selvaraj by a narrow margin. He was thus "pipped at the post". If you say, someone was pipped, it only means he was shot.



THE MAGIC PALACE

3

(The people of Veergiri are sad as there will be no birthday celebrations for Princess Vidyavati. She has taken ill suddenly. Though the Raj Vaidya assures King Veerasen and Queen Vajreshwari that there is no cause for anxiety, according to the Raj Jyotishi, she is passing through a very bad period and he advises a change of residence. Accordingly, she is taken to the royal resort in a nearby lake, where she has only the queen's maid, old Kamala, for company. On days suggested by the Jyotishi, the king and queen visit the princess twice, but on their third visit, they find she is missing from the lake palace....)

Princess Vidyavati woke up suddenly in the middle of the night. Someone was shaking her. "Princess! Vidyavati! Wake up, please, we've to go to the palace!" It was the maid, Kamala.

"At this hour? Why?" the princess could not understand, as she forced sleep out of her.

"What has happened?"

"Your father, His Majesty, he is ill. He wants to see you. The boat has come to fetch us." Kamala looked worried. She had covered her head to keep back her dishevelled hair.

"But I'm not supposed to leave the island resort for some months!" the princess reminded



Kamala was walking fast slightly ahead of her. On reaching the boat, she held out her hand to help the princess get in.

The princess was feeling sleepy, and there was a cold wind blowing. She sat huddled, in one corner. Kamala, beside her, was silent, and Vidyavati was in no mood to talk, either. The boat took an unusually long time to reach the other side of the lake. Engrossed in thoughts about her father, the princess did not take it strange. A palanquin was waiting for her. As soon as the princess got in, the four bearers heaved it on to their shoulders and walked fast, but silently. Vidyavati thought that she had seen Kamala walking beside the palanquin.

She did not know for how long she slept, but she was woken up by the heavy "Ho-Hai! Ho-Hai!" of the palanquin-bearers.

Vidyavati realised that the palanquin was now in an inclined position, and suddenly remembered that there was no climb on the way to the palace. She could also hear leaves rustling as the bearers changed steps. She

her.

"Normally, His Majesty and the Queen, your mother, should have come here today. They didn't, because the king was ill. We're going only because he has expressed a desire to see you. We shall come back here tomorrow," assured Kamala.

By then, Vidyavati had got up from her bed. The two of them walked up to the boat. The moon had gone behind the clouds and in the faint skylight, the princess failed to notice that it was not the usual path that led to the boat from the lake palace. Besides,

slowly drew the curtain and peeped out. It was something like a jungle that she saw in the moonlight. And the men were climbing a winding path to a mountain. She stared outside for an extra moment. Kamala was *not* walking by the side of the palanquin. She was now certain that she was *not* being taken to the palace. Where else? Had her parents left the palace, and were they waiting for her at some other place?

Though Vidyavati was beset with these thoughts, she did not try to halt the palanquin-bearers to question them, as it was night and they were still in the mountainous jungle. Suddenly the "Ho-Hai" from the palanquin-bearers stopped and the palanquin was slowly lowered to the ground.

"Princess, you may come out," she heard a woman's voice. Vidyavati came out and stood on what appeared to be a courtyard in front of a palatial building. It was the same woman who had accompanied her from the lake resort and looked very much like maid Kamala—in appearance and dress. However, it was only



now that she found the voice was really not that of old Kamala. Her doubts were confirmed when the woman spoke again. "Come on, Princess, this is where you'll stay in the days to come."

"Where are we?" Princess Vidyavati asked her. She was calm and cool. "And who are you, by the way? Where's my father, the king? You told me he was unwell and wished to meet me. This is not our palace!"

"Don't get angry with me, O Princess!" said the woman. "I can't answer all of your questions. This palace? Well, we call it



the Magic Palace! You need know only that much. You'll be safe here and will be looked after well, till ..." the woman left the sentence incomplete.

"Till?" the princess echoed the ominous word. "And who are you? You haven't yet told me!"

"You may call me Kamala," replied the woman, simply, and after a pause, added, "You'll stay here as long as my master wants!"

"And who's your master?" Vidyavati noticed there was a tremor in her voice, but she was

quite composed.

"That you'll come to know by and by," said the woman. "For the present, let's go inside. Your sleep was disturbed, so you must go to bed immediately." The woman appeared to be in full command of the situation. She then turned to the palanquin-bearers. "You can go now." She waited till they disappeared into the darkness.

The woman led the way up the steps. In the first light of dawn, Vidyavati saw that she was really entering another palace. Everything about it appeared beautiful. What struck her most was the generous use of mirrors everywhere. Wherever there was no large-sized mirror, the walls and pillars were at least stuck with pieces of mirror. In whichever direction she turned, she could only see her own reflection!

Kamala and Vidyavati crossed the wide verandah, entered a long passage at the end of which was a flight of stairs. The princess was taken to a room upstairs. It was beautifully decorated with fresh flowers; everything there was glittering. All around there were

mirrors and mirrors!

"You'll straight away go to bed and sleep, till I wake you up," the woman said authoritatively, ■ she removed the counterpane from the bed.

Princess Vidyavathi did not think of protesting or resisting as she guessed she was far away from her parents and the palace, and she was not sure what was further in store for her in the Magic Palace. For the time being, she reconciled herself to her fate, as she got into bed. Sleep did not come to her immediately. She thought of her parents. She remembered that they had not visited her for almost three weeks. Perhaps, what the woman Kamala told her was true, and her father was really ill. Suddenly she remembered her maid, old Kamala. Where was she when she was being led out of the lake resort? She didn't recollect having seen a third person in the island palace, as she came out. All the while she was made to believe that it was the old maid herself who was accompanying her. Kamala must have been in her room. The princess prayed that no harm should come to her

and she herself would be able to rejoin her parents as soon as possible.

Back in the island resort, King Veerasen and Queen Vajreshwari awaited the arrival of the Commander-in-Chief. Ugrasen was the queen's elder brother. The way the boatman conveyed the king's orders, immediately put him on the alert. He sensed something terrible must have happened on the island resort. He only hoped that the princess—his niece—was safe. The moment he climbed the steps, Ugrasen knew that his premise was only half-true. Something had happened in the island palace, and everything was not well with the princess. For, he saw, on entering the palace, the king, queen and the maid staring at each other; they were stark silent, too.

He bowed to the king. "What happened to Vidyavati, your majesty?" he asked. "Where is she?"

"She's missing, Ugrasen!" the king answered precisely, and fell silent.

"She's nowhere here! My



darling daughter is missing!" added the queen in between long sighs. "She seems to have slept for ■ while and then left the bed..." She could not complete the sentence as she was overcome with grief.

Ugrasen turned to maid Kamala as if to seek more details. "I was sleeping in the room next to hers, and I seem to have slept like a log and didn't hear the princess getting up from the bed, calling out to me, or even leaving her room or the palace. I searched for her everywhere. We both use only a small part of the

palace and we don't go to the other parts at all. In fact, there's no need. I don't know where she has disappeared! I can't imagine, the princess is missing!"

"Your majesty, let me go and check up again," Ugrasen sought the king's permission and went out to make a thorough search of the palace and the gardens in one part of the island resort. He could not find his niece anywhere there. Before he went back to the palace, he questioned the boatman. No, he had no occasion to take the boat out after he had brought back the two maids the previous afternoon. Nobody else would have used the boat, as it was for the exclusive use of the king and queen, and people from the royal household.

The Commander-in-Chief came to the conclusion that, as no other boat was available, the princess would not have attempted to go to the shore all by herself, nor would she have tried to swim the lake as it was deep in certain areas and the island was ■ little away from that part of the banks normally used by the people.

When he made known his

surmise to the king and queen, they agreed with him. "Someone must have approached the island from another part of the lake," said Ugrasen, "and he or she must have stealthily gained entry into the palace and taken away the princess by force or guile."

"Do you mean to say, Vidya-vati has been kidnapped?" asked King Veerasen unbelievingly.

"Who should want to kidnap my darling child?" wailed Queen Vajreshwari. "My lord! What shall we do now? How can we find her? It's not for nothing that the Raj Jyotishi said she is passing through very bad times. Can anything be worse than this? Do something, my lord!" she entreated her husband.

By then, Ugrasen had made

certain decisions. "Your majesty, let the maid remain here, in the palace, for some days in case the princess were to come back as mysteriously as she had disappeared. I shall see that the entire island is guarded by soldiers. They will keep a day-and-night vigil to apprehend any intruders. Let's now go back to the palace and consult others before we make any announcement. The people will be agitated. We've to take care of such a situation. Fortunately, the boatman does not know that the princess has disappeared."

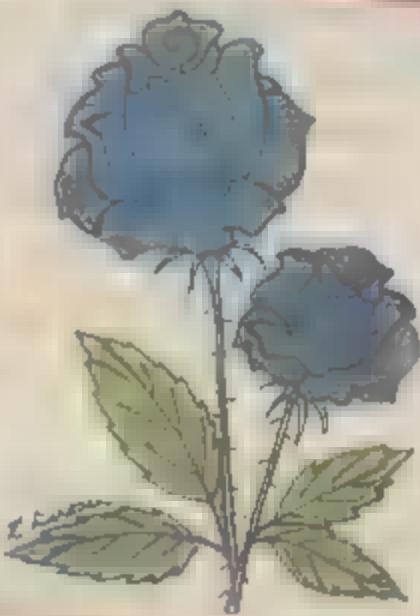
In fact, the boatman did not suspect that there was anything wrong, when his three passengers remained silent till they reached the shore.

—To continue



Blue Roses

What was once considered a "horticultural impossibility" is soon to become a reality. That is, if the 4-year research undertaken by some scientists in Australia succeeds. They have isolated the gene that gives flowers like petunia and iris their blue colour, and are now transferring the blue-tone inducing gene to roses. Latest reports say that they are very close to success and hope to grow the first ever blue roses by early 1993.



Rare Vulture

India has eight species of vultures, which the Pondicherry Vulture is the rarest and almost on the verge of extinction. In fact, this species was once seen only in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, from where it has totally disappeared. The Kamala Nehru Zoo in Ahmedabad has three of these rare birds which are also called King Vulture. These red-headed birds are generally shy of human company.

Largest Number

Compared to all other living creatures, the beetle population is the largest on earth. In fact, there are 250,000 different species of beetles. Taking all insects into consideration, there are 5,000,000 different species in the world. The insect population totals 1,000,000,000,000,000!



A Lesson Well Received



Gopal was neither poor nor rich. Whatever he earned, he spent carefully and kept aside his savings so that he could lead a comfortable life when he got married. He spared some money to repair and modify his small house, which he decorated with pictures, flower vases, and similar artefacts, none of them very costly.

The day he brought Vaidehi home, she spent a lot of time

admiring the curios. They were all quite new and novel to her, as till her marriage, she had been confined to her village where such artefacts were seldom seen.

Unfortunately for her, that day itself she broke a beautiful vase which slipped from her hands. The sound of the crash brought Gopal inside. He helped her in picking up the broken pieces. "I'm so sorry, I should have been



more careful," said Vaidehi apologetically.

Gopal accepted her apologies silently, and Vaidehi knew that he had kept quiet because they had just been married. Later, as she was serving food to him, she apologised once again, "I'm really sorry about that flower vase."

"Just forget it, dear," said Gopal, trying to put her at ease. "If a similar piece is available, I shall certainly buy it, so that we won't miss it."

Days passed, and Vaidehi carefully avoided handling the

curios. So much so, dust set on them. Gopal himself had no time to clean them, so one day, as he was stepping out to go on his business, he told Vaidehi, "The place needs dusting; will you attend to it? Only, be careful while you handle them."

After he had gone away, Vaidehi took them one after the other, and dusted them and cleaned them, first with a damp cloth, then with a dry one. Everytime she brought one down, she would sit on the floor and place the article on her lap while she cleaned it. Thus there was no chance of any one of them falling down. While placing them back, she would experiment by changing the location to find whether a new place and a new angle would not enhance their beauty.

There was one lovely picture of a waterfall that Gopal had kept above the window facing the garden. Vaidehi had to climb on a stool to take it off the wall. However, as she was placing it back, she was unable to hook it properly on the nail. She stood on her tip-toe and raised herself to the required height. The stool

tripped, and Vaidehi jumped down to avoid a fall, in the process twisting one foot, and the picture flying away from her hand and crashing down on the floor.

Her foot was paining, but unmindful of her discomfort, she swept the floor of the glass pieces. Luckily, the engraved frame was intact, so also the painting. She hung it on a low nail for the time being, and then attended to her foot. By evening, it had developed some swelling and Vaidehi walked with a limp.

When Gopal returned a little after dusk, he at once noticed that his wife was limping. "What happened?" he asked anxiously. "Is it paining? Didn't you apply some balm?"

"I couldn't find any around, so I poured a lot of cold water. The pain is not that much," she said, carefully avoiding any mention of her mishap, and the painting.

However, Gopal did not take much time to guess what had happened, as he saw the wall above the window bare and the picture without the glass, hanging from a new place. It was only



when he took it off the nail and placed it back on the wall above the window that Vaidehi went near him to explain how it all had happened. "If you found it beyond your reach, you should have avoided taking it off the wall. You could have told me and I would have attended to it. You were not careful, despite my cautioning you."

Gopal was very angry with her and that day he hurried with his dinner. He did not wish to drag the subject — he knew that Vaidehi was even otherwise nursing the pain on her foot.



After about a month, they had to go back to Vaidehi's village to participate in the wedding of one of her relations. Asking her to return to their place on her own, Gopal went on a day's visit to his business associate in another village.

Vaidehi spent some time with her parents and then started on her way back, accompanied by her younger brother. On the way they stopped by the weekly market where a pair of jars, looking identical, attracted her attention. She asked for the price and when she found that she had

enough money on her, she made bold and bought them. She thought, that might make amends for the vase and picture that she broke because of her carelessness. She was certain that her husband would like them when he saw them adorning the window-sill.

Gopal did not miss seeing the two jars as they were very prominent against the light coming through the window. But he could not appreciate the way his wife was seeking atonement for her carelessness. He decided that she deserved a harsher lesson. So, he aimed a blow at them with his strong, hefty hand. Both jars fell down and were reduced to smithereens.

"What have you done?" shouted Vaidehi, rushing from the kitchen. "Are you mad?"

"No! I broke them so that you wouldn't have the trouble of breaking them later!" he retorted coolly.

Vaidehi did not utter a word. She controlled her tears and went back to the kitchen. Not a word passed between husband and wife about the incident. Gopal thought that Vaidehi had had her

lesson. He did not know she was biding her time.

One day, he called her and said she should go to the market and get some fish for their lunch. Vaidehi went out and when she came back, she was holding her bag with great care. She opened it to show the fish, still alive, to Gopal. "Ah! That's a good variety. They'll make a nice curry."

To his surprise, he saw her going, not to the kitchen but to the little pond behind their house, into which she released the fish.

"What have you done, you foolish woman?" he shouted indignantly.

"I released them to save you the botheration of releasing them yourself!" said Vaidehi nonchalantly.

Gopal realised that his lesson had gone deep down in her mind. So, he kept quiet.

Some days later, they heard that one of their relations, who had renounced the world to become a *sanyasi*, was back home to look up his people. Gopal told his wife that they could expect a visit from him.



"Be careful when you talk to him," he advised her. "Do you know how to talk to people much older than you?"

"No, you can teach me," said Vaidehi.

"You've to be very polite to them. You must speak only when you're spoken to. If they ask about your family, you must also ask them about their family. That's how you return politeness for politeness. When he comes, I shall talk to him for a while, and then pretend that I'm going out for a short while. You can talk to him at that time. But I'll be hiding

behind the curtain to hear all that you say to him."

When the *sanyasi* arrived, the husband and wife received him with great reverence and served him milk and fruits. As agreed to between the two, Gopal excused himself for a while, leaving the venerable visitor with Vaidehi.

"I'm very happy to see you!" said the *sanyasi*, smiling through his thick white beard. "How tall you've grown! I remember seeing you not taller than a pounding stone!"

"I'm very happy to see you, too, great uncle!" responded Vaidehi politely. "You too have grown several feet since I last saw you. I remember seeing you when you came up to only my knee."

The *sanyasi* continued to

smile. He thought she was just being childish. "How're your grandparents? We were good friends!" he queried.

"Oh! They're very well, thank you, great uncle," replied Vaidehi very politely. "By the way how'er your grandparents? We were great friends when we were children!"

The *sanyasi* by now had concluded that his niece was either a mad woman or was trying to make a fool of him. "Where's your husband?" he asked angrily. "Call him here immediately!"

"He is there, behind the curtain, listening whether I am speaking to you politely just as he had taught me!"

Gopal now made his appearance. He had a sheepish look on him.



CHANDAMAMA SUPPLEMENT-44



BIRDS AND ANIMALS OF INDIA

THE ENDANGERED RHINOCEROS

The Rhinoceros is seen only in India, Indonesia, and certain parts of Africa. The Great Indian Rhinoceros is the most famous among the five kinds—the others being the Black and White Rhinoceros of Africa, the Java Rhino and the Sumatra Rhino. A distinguishing feature of this rather uncouth looking animal is its horn on the snout. The Indian kind has only one horn, while two horns are commonly seen on the rhinos of Africa. The horn is not a bone formation, but mere tufts of hair formed into a hard substance. The ears, shaped like a cornet, have hair along the edges; the tail, too, has hair on the lower part. Otherwise, the animal's skin is smooth and soft. The body is stout and large. The height up to the shoulders averages 180 cm.

Some people believe that the rhino horn has medicinal properties. They heartlessly kill the animal to get the horn. The number of rhinos thus began dwindling at a fast pace. The government, therefore, declared the rhinoceros as an endangered animal and established sanctuaries for them. These sanctuaries are the most famous Kaziranga, Jaldapara, Gorumara and Sonai-Rupai—all of them located in Assam. There is evidence that the animals lived in large numbers even in the pre-historic period.

CHILDREN IN THE NEWS



YOUNGEST FILM MUSIC COMPOSER

A 5-year-old girl in a small town in West Godavari district one day pushed a few of her clothes into a little bag and left home without telling her parents. She was cross with them as they were reluctant to fulfil her wish—to be taken to Madras to meet her favourite playback singer.

This happened seven years ago. Much water has flowed under the bridge, and today Sreelekha is hailed as the youngest ever composer of film music, and may even earn a place in the Guinness Book of Records. She recently completed her first ever recording of a song for a Telugu film sung by none other than Chitra. The popular playback singer did not mind that she was being 'directed' by a little girl. Nor did anybody in the 20-piece orchestra, for that matter.

What happened in these seven years will make interesting reading. Sreelekha was traced by the police and her parents. Her cousin, Maragadamani, a film

composer himself, came to her rescue and offered to take her under his wing. He trained her in classical music and introduced to her the nuances of film music.

Sreelekha, meanwhile, took one firm decision—she will not go to school! She wanted to learn only music and more music. She had an uncanny memory for the hundreds of *ragas*. Soon Maragadamani spotted her talents and allowed her to accompany him whenever he went for recordings for movies. For two years, the little girl pursued her passion with single-minded devotion.

One day, Maragadamani asked her to join the orchestra during a recording. Sreelekha had by then started playing the harmonium. So, she grabbed an instru-

ment kept in the recording room and played the notes with great ease. Veterans who were present there sat up. Here was someone who had the potential of a budding composer. Soon afterwards, lyricist Vairamuthu gave her the words of a song that he had composed; Sreelekha did not take more than three minutes "to set it to a sweet lyrical tune".

Critics who have watched and listened to her is all praise for the "originality of her creation".

Look for a 12-year-old girl, in jeans and shirt or salwar kameez, but sporting a forehead smeared with *vibhuti* (holy ash). She is Sreelekha. She spends long hours in her Puja room every day.

If ever you see the name Manimekalai in the credit titles as the music director of a film, no, you won't be mistaken. That's the name Sreelekha has chosen for her film career: an indirect tribute to her cousin, Maragadamani.

DO YOU KNOW?

- When Kerala celebrated *Vishu* on April 14 to mark the start of a harvest year (Meda Samkramam), the same day a State in the north-east of India celebrated a festival, which similarly marks the new year. Which State? What is the festival called?
- A Christian saint's day coincides with May Day. Which saint?
- The city of Boukephala reminds us of two world famous names. Who are they?
- An oiled coconut is used as the ball in a game in India. What is the name of the game, and where is it played?
- For how many years did Chandragupta Maurya rule? His son ruled for an extra year. What was his name?
- Which is the script used for Russian?
- A princess was a member of the Union Cabinet for the first ever time. Who was she?
- Who created the famous rock garden in Chandigarh?
- Aurangazeb imprisoned one of his daughters for 20 years for her unorthodox views. Who was she?
- Which Sikh Guru included Jayadev's songs in *Gita Govinda* in the holy Granth Sahib?
- Why is the *tulsi* plant kept in the front courtyard of houses?
- Which famous non-political figure was elected to the Parliament from Calcutta?
- Who broke Carl Lewis's long-standing 100m record?
- How do storks, which have no voice, attract mates?
- In 1804, the same year Napoleon became Emperor of France, a great event took place in the world of transport. What was it?

ANSWERS

Assam — "Bihu"
8. NEK Chand
9. Zebunissa
10. Guru Angua Singh
11. It is believed to bring safety and prosperity.
12. Meghnad Sheva
13. Leroy Burrell
14. By a vigorous dance
15. The first steam locomotive was successfully run by R. Trevithick

Jesus Christ
2. Saint Joseph the carpenter, foster father of
3. Alexander the Great rounded the city when his horse Bucephalus died there.
4. Yubee Lakpee — Malipur.
5. 24 years — Bindusara, father of Ashoka.
6. Dylan
7. Rajkumar Amrit Kaur was the Health Minister in the Nehru cabinet
8. Rajkumar Amrit Kaur was the Health Minister in the Nehru cabinet

On the Size of a

Million and Billion are words used every day. To imagine how much a trillion is may be difficult. More so will be one-trillionth, which is quite mouthful. But, then, there is a simple word for it: Pico. The latest to make use of that word is 'Pico computer', to mean that it is smaller than even a microcomputer, which is how a desktop personal computer (P.C.) is described. Of the size of your palm, this pocket-sized Pico computer uses the new superchip. The day may not be far when you may be carrying your P.C. on your watch or pen!

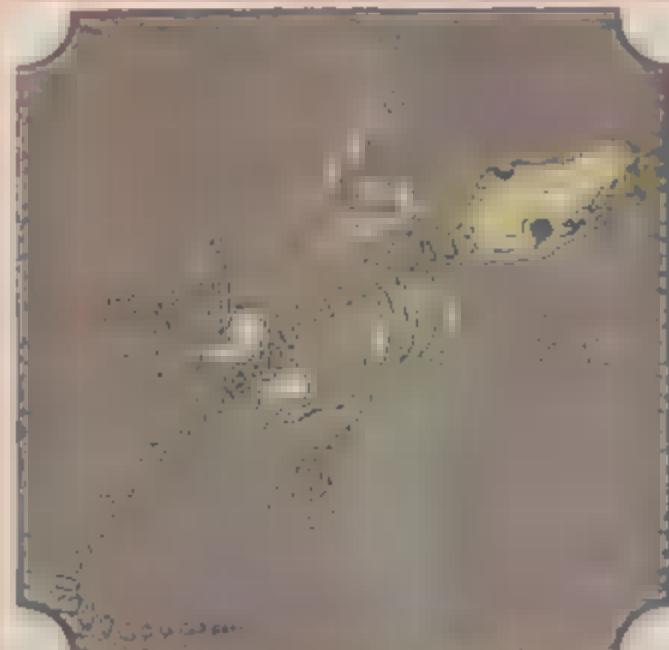


The Shinkansen Express, running in northwestern Japan, the other day achieved a speed of 345 km per hour. The record was set in a tunnel between Jomo Kogen and Urawa stations. Last March,

Fastest



the same train had reached a speed of 336 km per hour. That was on a test run. The world record, however, is to the credit of a French TGV super express (515.3 km) set in May 1990.



Oldest

Some fossils were found in Scotland around 1850—almost 150 years ago. Recently, scientists of Oxford University, who had been examining them for their research study, revealed that they belong to a backboned creature which walked on land some 370 million years ago. They believe, it must have been a huge salamander or crocodile but with a fin on the tail and gills. These fossils have out-distanced (in time) those found in Greenland, hitherto considered as 360 million years old.



Stories From Many Lands (Malaysia)

How Luck Eluded Him

The Sultan of Malaya had an uncanny knack of predicting things. The rulers of the neighbouring states often used to consult him. He had only to look at the person's face and would then be able to give an indication of his or her future.

One day, he was strolling in the garden when his eyes fell on one of the soldiers who were on guard duty. They were marching from one end to the other. This

soldier was correctly keeping steps with the others, yet his sad face attracted the Sultan's attention. He watched him for a while, then stopped the guards and asked him to step forward. The others continued their marching.

As the soldier walked towards him, the Sultan looked intently at his face and came to the conclusion that he was born at a time when the stars were not in a



favourable position, that he was passing through a difficult time, and that there was every likelihood of his remaining so. The Sultan took pity on him and wished to help him if he would help himself.

The soldier stopped in front of the Sultan and bowed low in obeisance. When he raised his face, the Sultan asked him, "What's your name?"

"Kanchi, Your Majesty," replied the soldier, reverentially.

"Kanchi, how's your family?" queried the Sultan. "Is all well with you?"

"Nothing to complain about, Your Majesty," said Kanchi modestly. "Honestly, I don't have a family; I'm not married. I don't have enough money to buy gifts for my bride."

"That's too bad, Kanchi," said the Sultan. "Let's see whether you can have some better days. I shall give you a special work. Wait here till I come back." The Sultan then went inside the palace and after a while, he came out with a long sealed envelope in hand. "I want you to take this letter to the Chief of Wonogiri. Here's some money for your food on the way. Go immediately." The Sultan gave him two silver coins.

Kanchi bowed low again, gave him a smart salute, and went away. It was a hot day and as he walked in the sun, Kanchi grumbled. "Two silver pieces to trudge such a long distance!" But he did not stop till he came to a village. He saw the cool portico of a house and sat there to rest.

Suddenly the door opened, and who was standing before him than Sura, a fellow soldier who was on leave? "Sura! I

didn't know you stay here. How're you?"

"Kanchi! How come you're in this part of the world?" asked Sura curiously. "Where are you going? Are you also on leave?"

"Leave? For me?" exclaimed Kanchi, though wishing very much he had had a holiday. "No, Sura. I'm on my way to Wonogiri to deliver a letter from the Sultan to the District Chief there. Two full days of travel, and he has given me only two silver coins!" explained Kanchi, expressing his dissatisfaction.

"A letter from His Majesty?" said Sura unbelievingly. "Man, you should consider it an honour, to be asked to carry a letter from the Sultan. It only shows how much faith he has in you. I myself would have gone even if there was no money."

Thoughts raced in Kanchi's mind. 'Here's an opportunity to get myself out of this thankless job!' The next moment his face brightened up. "If that be the case, Sura," he said, "will you consider my offer? We'll share the two silver coins that the Sultan gave me. Will you go to Wonogiri and deliver the letter?"



Sura readily agreed. After all, he was on leave and he was getting one full coin. And from his house, the place was just one day's journey. Kanchi, shared a meal with Sura, and shared the money, too, before Sura proceeded to Wonogiri, and Kanchi returned to his barracks, pleased with himself, as one whole silver coin was his without straining much.

Before noon the next day, Sura was at the doorstep of the Chief. His was a big house with a garden all around. On one side was his stable with several



horses. By the time his knock was answered, Sura had wiped his face clean and patted his dishevelled hair into position, making himself presentable. Today he was none other than the Sultan's messenger carrying an important letter.

"I've been sent by the Sultan," he told the servant. "Please tell your master that I'm carrying a letter from him for the Chief."

The servant rushed inside, and soon came back to usher in Sura. The Chief was reclining on a bed on the floor and Sura was offered a low platform to sit! Sura pulled

out the sealed envelope. "Sir, this has been given by His Majesty with instructions that it be delivered personally."

The Chief tore open the envelope and took out the letter. As he read the contents, he was smiling.

Sura took courage in asking the Chief, "I hope it contains glad tidings!"

"Indeed, it does," remarked the Chief. "Stay back for lunch when I shall tell you all about it. Make yourself comfortable here, and the servant will bring you tea while you rest."

As he was led to a side room, Sura thought, 'My surmise was right. It's an honour to be the Sultan's messenger. That lazy chap—Kanchi. He doesn't know what he has missed!'

Meanwhile, the Chief ordered a rich meal, saying he had an important guest. Sura was overwhelmed by the luncheon which was served on a lavish scale. He ate everything with great relish, all the while pitying his friend, Kanchi, for his foolishness, and thanking his own lucky stars.

Luncheon over, the Chief took him to the verandah where they

both sat on thick beds supported by cushions on all sides. "You mean to say, you don't know the contents of the Sultan's letter?" began the Chief. Sura nodded his head.

"His Majesty wants me to give the bearer of the letter the hand of my youngest daughter and accept him as my son-in-law. The Sultan himself would pay the bride price and arrange for all the customary gifts. I am accepting the Sultan's offer, but do you agree to marry my daughter?"

Sura was bewildered when he was told about the contents of the Sultan's letter. Suddenly he remembered, he was not the real messenger of the Sultan. It was Kanchi—a mere palace guard like him. Yet, why did the Sultan decide that a soldier should marry the Chief's daughter? He could not think of any reason or explanation. Anyway, why should he bother now? Fortune had smiled on him and why should he deny himself the joy and pleasure Fate had given him?

The wedding was a grand affair. Sura spent all his leave in the company of his bride, and the



happy couple later called on the Sultan to pay their obeisance to him and express their gratitude.

The Sultan, who had noticed Kanchi back on duty after two days of absence, guessed that something must have gone wrong with him just as he had thought when he looked at the soldier's face for the first time. His guess was now confirmed when another soldier presented the Chief's daughter as his bride. The Sultan concluded that Kanchi had disobeyed his orders. Instead of punishing him, which would have made matters worse for the



soldier, the Sultan took pity on him and decided to give him another chance.

Kanchi himself was taken aback when he saw his friend with the Sultan. Later, he accosted Sura and asked him how he had managed to get such a beautiful bride for himself. "You seem to have forgotten about that letter from the Sultan that you wanted me to take to the Chief of Wonogiri." He then described to Kanchi all that had happened after he delivered the letter. Kanchi went away with a crestfallen face. He realised how

foolish he had been.

A few days later, Kanchi was summoned by the Sultan. He stood before him pale-faced and with shaking feet. But the Sultan put him at ease. He did not question him about the task he had given him earlier. Meanwhile, a servant brought a big watermelon on a tray. "Kanchi, this is for you. Take it home. I'm sure you'll relish it. It's quite sweet."

Kanchi bowed low once again. "Thank you, Your Majesty! You're very *kind*," said Kanchi, emphasising on the word 'kind'. The Sultan smiled, as though he understood what Kanchi had in mind.

As he walked home with the watermelon, he realised how heavy it was. He wished his room in the barracks was nearby. On his way, he passed by a tobacco shop and suddenly remembered that he had no stock of tobacco, and he had not bought any because there was not much left in his month's wages. He needed tobacco more than the watermelon, so he decided to sell the fruit.

He went to the nearby market

where he found an old fruitseller. Luckily she was not keeping any watermelon. "Would you like to buy this watermelon from me? It's sweet and juicy."

"From where did you get it?" she queried.

"It's from the Sultan's garden. His Majesty gave it to me as he was pleased with my duty. I'm a palace guard."

"Strange! You're selling away a fruit given by the Sultan himself? I don't believe you got it from His Majesty. You must have stolen it from his garden!"

"I swear he had himself given it to me!" Kanchi protested. "You see, I badly need some money to buy tobacco, and I'll get my wages only after some days. That's why I'm selling it."

"All right, I'll accept your word," said the woman. "How much will you take for it?"

"It's a huge watermelon; I'll sell it for fifty cents," said Kanchi.

"Watermelon everywhere is the same, whether it's from the royal garden, or elsewhere," the woman bargained. "I shall not buy it for more than thirty cents. Take it or leave it."



"That's too little for such a huge fruit. And it's quite sweet, I tell you," said Kanchi. "Come on, we'll settle for forty cents."

"You haven't tasted it, still you say it's sweet, and you want me to believe it?" the woman ridiculed him. "Okay, here's forty cents, and don't stay here for a moment longer." Kanchi straight away proceeded to the tobacco shop.

The woman was feeling thirsty and as she had no second watermelon to offer to her customers, she decided to eat this herself. 'It must be tasty, coming as it does from the Sultan's garden,' she

mused as she began cutting it open. At first she thought she had been cheated, because it was hollow inside. Everything had been scooped out. The next moment the knife touched something metallic and when the melon was divided into two halves, what did she find other than glittering gold coins and glistening jewellery?

Soon word spread about the poor old woman's windfall. People gathered around her and she told them how she had bought the fruit from a palace guard who had claimed that it was given to him by the Sultan himself.

Kanchi, too, came to hear about the watermelon he had sold to the woman for forty cents. As he was bemoaning his Fate,

word came from the Sultan that he wanted him to carry another letter to the Chief. However, this time he was not called to the presence of the Sultan. The messenger had brought the envelope with him.

Kanchi was happy as the Sultan had given him a chance to atone for his past acts. He hurried to the Chief, who opened the envelope and first read the letter and then read out the contents. The letter said: "*The bearer of this letter should be put behind bars. He disobeyed me twice.*"

Some people are born lucky, while others seem to have no luck at all. Things go wrong for them even when people go out of their way to help them. Would you call it Fate?





VEER HANUMAN



(Nala builds a bridge to Lanka in five days. Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, and Hanuman lead the Vanara army along the bridge. Their arrival at the gates of Lanka causes a flutter among the rakshasas. Ravana sends spies to assess the Vanara strength and decides to approach Sita once again.)

Nala gave some suggestions for building a bridge to cross the sea to Lanka and waited for Sree Rama's approval. Rama consulted Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, Angada, and other Vanara leaders, besides Vibhishana and then gave orders to Nala to go ahead with the work.

The Vanara soldiers spread out to gather stones and boulders, trees and branches. Everything was thrown into the sea to shape out a bridge. Everyone lent his hand. When one section was ready, it was bound together with strong ropes and the pathway was made strong to take the weight of the huge army.

ARRIVAL IN LANKA



The bridge was wide enough to allow the marching columns of Vanaras. It was ready in just five days. The Vanara soldiers were very happy and tested the strength of the bridge by marching up and down in merriment.

Sugriva did not want Sree Rama and Lakshmana to walk on the bridge barefoot. So, at his bidding, Hanuman carried Sree Rama on his shoulders, while Angada carried Lakshmana. Everybody was joyous. They were fully confident that success would be theirs once they

reached Lanka and took on Ravana and his rakshasas in battle. As they walked on the bridge, Sree Rama was planning the strategies of war.

When they neared Lanka, the Vanara soldiers saw trees full of ripe, juicy fruits. They began leaving their columns to go after the fruits. Rama checked them and asked them to resume their march.

As the Vanara army closed in on Lanka, there arose shouts and shrieks from the apartments and buildings. The Vanaras, too, raised their voices as though to offer a challenge.

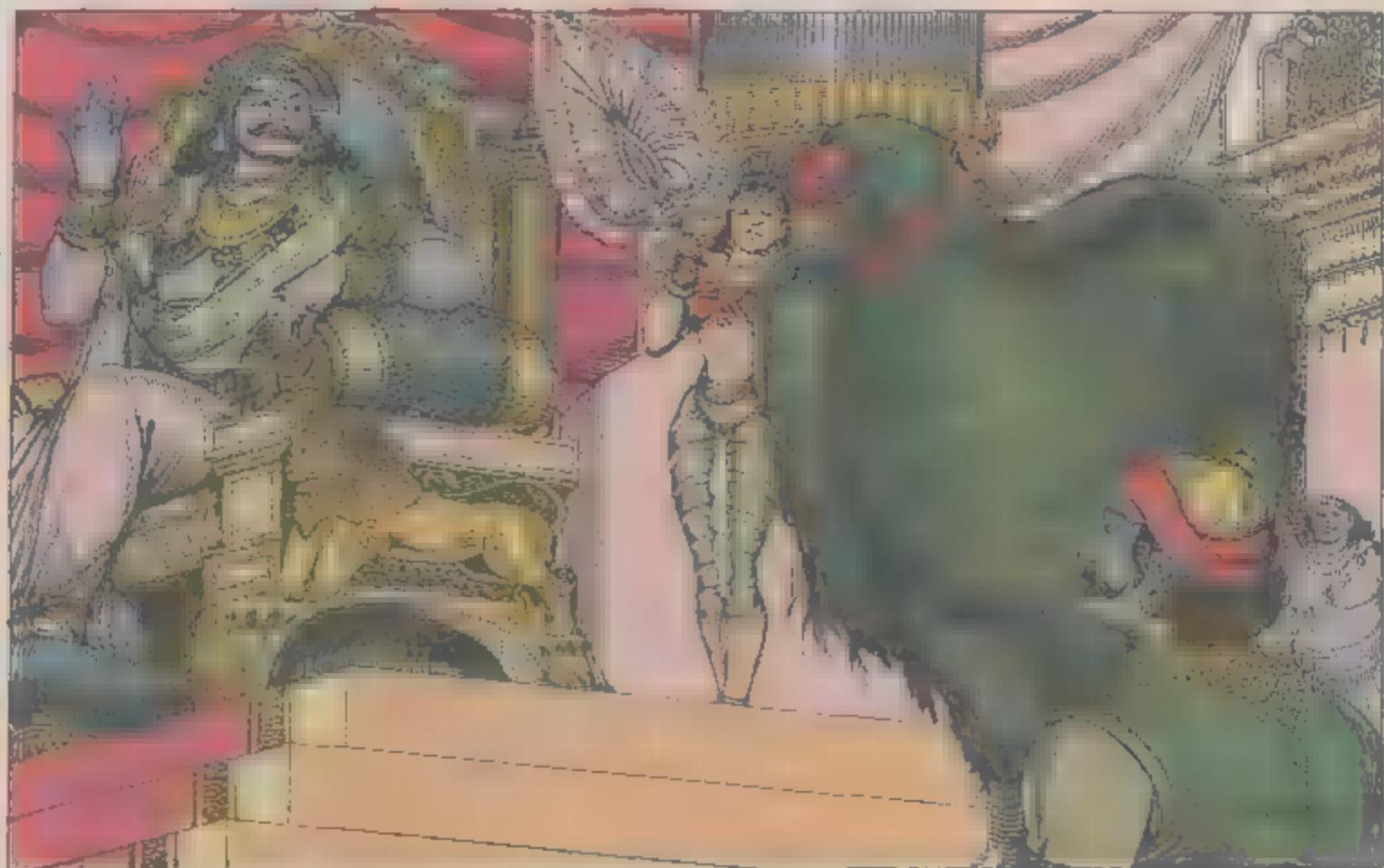
The moment Rama saw Lanka from a distance, he had only one thought—Sita and how to rescue her. He wondered how she would have managed to live there all these days, confined ■ she was inside a mighty fortress.

From the tall buildings in Lanka flew flags of different colours. Sree Rama drew plans with an arrow to indicate the deployment of soldiers. It was decided that Rishabha would form the right flank and Gandhamadan the left one. Himself

and Lakshmana would lead from the middle. Sugriva would be in command at the back to take care of any sudden attack from behind. Sree Rama explained the manoeuvres to be adopted. The Vanaras made a Garuda-shaped formation.

"Now you can release Ravana's messenger, Suka," said Sree Rama to Sugriva. Suka rushed to the presence of Ravana and said, "Your majesty, I did as you had ordered and went across and gave your message to Sugriva. I'm afraid we did not assess him properly. He is ready to sacrifice even his life for Rama. I

given a rough treatment by the Vanaras. They harassed me so much I was unable to move around and find out about their preparations. Now they have succeeded in constructing a bridge on which they have crossed over to Lanka. They are already at our gates. Wherever you turn, you can only see monkeys and bears. It is almost certain that they'll engage us in battle. I've gained some idea of their strength. I think they are very strong and mighty. If we want to avoid a war, the only way out is to return Sita to Rama."





Ravana was not expecting ■ suggestion like that from someone who was his envoy. He flew at him. "What did you say? Return Sita to Rama? Preposterous! Even if all the *devas* were to come to me with such an advice, I shall not accept it. In fact, I'm willing to fight even the *devas*. My hands are itching for a fight. Rama has not understood me well. Can he withstand my might? If he is eager to meet with his death in battle, I shall fulfil his desire!" shrieked Ravana in mockery.

Ravana was hesitant to accept all that Suka had told him. He could not believe that anybody had managed to build ■ bridge across the ocean. He called his minister, Sarana, and said, "You should go and find out all about this bridge—but do it secretly. Also find out the strength of the Vanara army, and the arms they carry."

Sarana and another minister assumed the form of monkeys and managed to mingle with the Vanara soldiers, and began counting them. But they found it an unmanageable task, because more and more contingents were pouring from all sides of the bridge.

Vibhishana recognised the two ministers from Lanka and pointed them out to Rama. "These two do not belong to our group. They're Ravana's ministers and they are really rakshasas in the form of monkeys. They've come to spy on us."

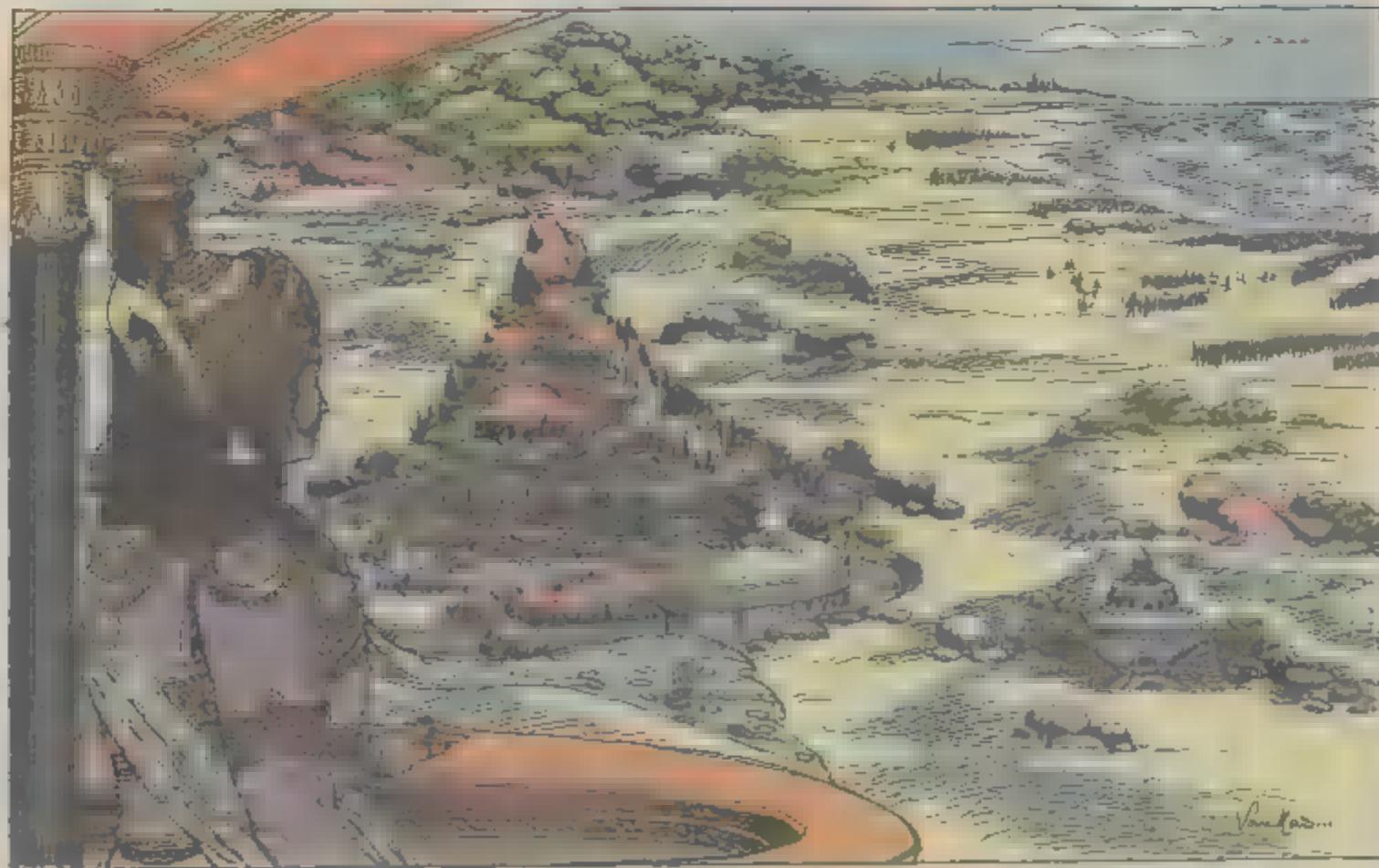
When they overheard Vibhishana, the two of them knew that they had no escape. So, they bowed to Rama and disclosed their identity and intentions.

Rama smiled. "You've my permission to assess the strength of my army. Find out all the details and then go and tell Ravana. I shall ask Vibhishana himself to take you round. Don't be afraid. Nobody will touch you, as you're unarmed." Then turning to Vibhishana, Rama added, "Set them free. They're only obeying their king's orders."

The two ministers profusely thanked Rama and went back to Lanka. They narrated their experiences to Ravana. "We were found out by Vibhishana. He took us to Rama. We found him a very kind-hearted person. It

was he who set us free. Why, he even allowed us to assess the strength of the Vanara army. You've no idea of its might, especially when they are led by people like Rama, Lakshmana, Sugriva, Hanuman, and Vibhishana. Hanuman alone will be enough to annihilate our soldiers. The Vanaras are countless, and they are in a state of full alert. We both feel that you should send back Sita."

"That's just not possible, you take it from me!" thundered Ravana. "Whatever be the consequent losses, I shall not return Sita. You're all cowards! You





must have started shivering when you saw the Vanara soliders. Is there anyone who'll be able to defeat me in war? You don't have to advise me; I know what I shall do!"

Ravana, too, wished to know the strength of the Vanara army. He went up to the terrace in his palace and trained his eyes on the Vanara army. Sarana was by his side. He asked his minister, "Who do you think is advising Sugriva about war strategies? Who're all the commanders?"

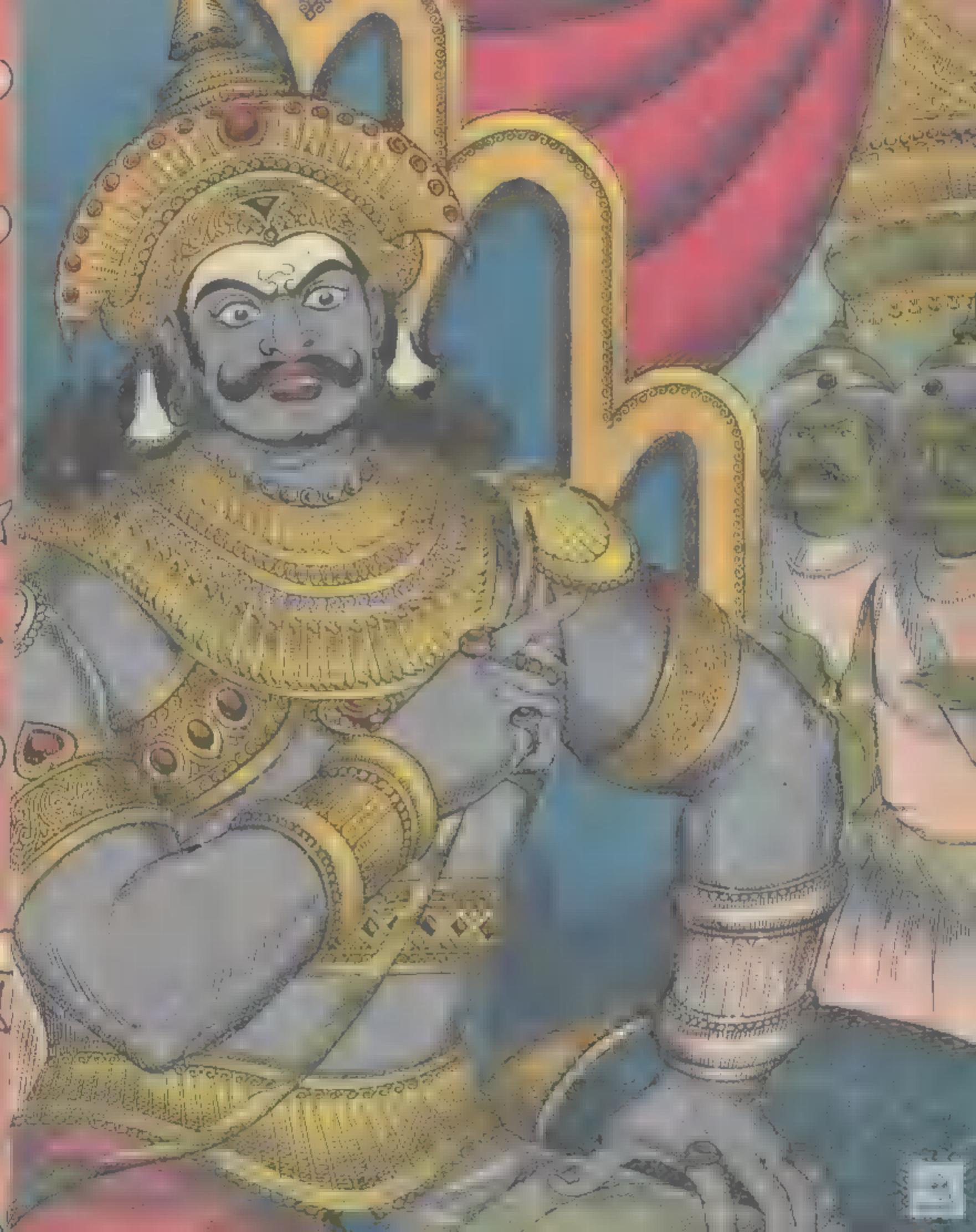
"Neela is the commander-in-

chief," explained Sarana. "Angada, the Prince of Kish-kindhya, is the son of Bali, and equally strong. We already know about Hanuman. Nala was in charge of constructing the bridge. It won't be easy to defeat him. Then there is Sweta. Quite a mighty warrior. He'll just smash whosoever gets into his hands."

Sarana was all praise for commanders like Sarambhan. He disclosed to Ravana that besides the Vanara soldiers, there was a large army of bears led by Jambavan. He pointed out Rama and Lakshmana and also Vibhishana in the midst of the Vanara army.

Ravana chided his ministers. "You'd better stop praising the enemy. I wonder how I'll win the war if I've ministers like you. I am retaining all of you only because of your long service with me. Better make yourselves scarce; I don't want to see your face for some time. Leave me alone."

Ravana then called Mahodara. "Send some spies to find out the strength of the Vanara



army. All those whom I had sent earlier have only words of praise for the enemy."

Some of Ravana's Lanka's spies went incognito to Mount Swela. They were bewildered when they saw the Vanara army that had spread out in front of the main gates to the city. Vibhishana caught hold of them. However, one of them called Sardula created some confusion among the Vanaras. Rama asked them to leave the place and they escaped, lest they met with their doom.

Sardula met Ravana and described his own experience. He narrated how he was allowed to go free by Rama. "I feel grateful to Rama. But for

him, I might have lost my life. The Vanara army is all ready for an attack. It's now for you to decide whether you would send back Sita or invite ■ fight."

Ravana was adamant. "Don't ever talk about returning Sita to Rama!" He asked a rakshasa called Vidyujiha to accompany him to where Sita was sitting. As they were walking, Ravana asked him to get hold of a head like that of Rama and also a bow, with his magical powers. "We shall show them to Sita and tell her that Rama is no more!" Ravana rewarded him with an ornament that he was wearing.

—To continue



THE KING'S SIN

Dark was the night and weird the atmosphere. It rained from time to time; gusts of wind shook the trees. Between thunderclaps and the moaning of jackals could be heard the eerie laughter of spirits. Flashes of lightning revealed fearsome faces.

But King Vikramaditya did not swerve a bit. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought down the corpse. However, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground, with the corpse lying on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse spoke: "O king, you're making untiring efforts and without respite as if you wish to achieve something. Do you think you'll earn any goodwill by carrying me in the dead of night? Sometimes good intentions may also turn evil. I'm reminded of the story of Mahendravarma. You'd better listen to it." The vampire then narrated this story.

Mahendravarma of Mayapuri ruled the kingdom well, ensuring the welfare of his subjects. He promoted literary and cultural activity in his land and rewarded poets, pundits, and philosophers. At the same time he showed no mercy to criminals and was strict in administering punishment to them. He encouraged discussions and exchange of ideas.

Once, a well-known philosopher visited him. The king received Sivagirinath with due respect and reverence, and invited him to the court, where the great thinker revealed the depth of his knowledge. Mahendravarma was mightily pleased and decorated him with the diamond necklace he himself was wearing. Sivagirinath accepted the reward with all humility, took leave of everybody, and started for Kasi.

On the way, he was attacked by a robber. When he refused to part with the diamond necklace, the robber killed him on the spot and disappeared with the priceless necklace. As luck would have it, he fell into the hands of the royal soldiers who took him to the king.

Mahendravarma sentenced him to death as he had killed Sivagirinath. Though the king felt that the robber was given the punishment he deserved, his mind was restless. He felt that he was in a way responsible for Sivagirinath's end because the robber had killed him for the sake of the necklace that he had rewarded him with. He regretted that he was even indirectly responsible for the killing and took it as if he had committed a sin, as he caused somebody to lose his life. Mahendravarma could not get any peace of mind and he soon fell ill. Each one of the physicians in the kingdom tried to treat him, but none succeeded and the king's condition only grew worse.

One day, a sagelike person arrived in Mayapuri. Queen Mayavati received Yoganath and told him about her husband's fate. She appealed to him to try and find a remedy for the king's illness. Yoganath was taken to the king's chambers. He was very sad to see Mahendravarma in such a condition. He felt pity, and went and sat near him and pacified him. "My child! Can a

Kshatriya king be so weak-minded? If you're so much overtaken by the death of just one person, how will you bear the death of so many on the battlefield? That thinker Sivagirinath died because of the greed of someone. How could you hold yourself responsible for his killing? It is not correct to conclude that you were in any way instrumental for his death. You gave the proper punishment to the criminal and thus discharged your duty as a king. A wise ruler should not disturb his mind any further."

"O sage! I'm not able to control my mind and pacify myself," said the king. "I feel like having committed a sin, and I'm not able to dispel that thought."

"I can understand your feelings, Mahendravarma," Yoganath tried to console him. "Let me see whether I can pacify your mind. Would you be happy if I were to give life back to Sivagirinath?"

The king's face suddenly brightened up. But the very next moment it appeared saddened. "O sage! I wish you could give life back to the robber as well."



To which Yoganath replied, "That's impossible, my child! I don't have adequate powers to give life to two persons. Even if I use all my powers, I would be able to grant life to only one of them. And all this because I really feel sorry for you and I want to help you overcome your agony."

"If that be so," said Mahendravarma, "then you may give life to Sivagirinath. I don't want to add to my sin any more."

The vampire concluded the story there and turned to King Vikramaditya: "O king! Don't you find Mahendravarma's atti-

tude strange? Yoganath offered to give life to Sivagirinath, yet why didn't the king accept it? If Sivagirinath had returned to life, the king would have recovered some peace of mind. Wasn't it almost a boon from Yoganath for the king who was holding himself responsible for the death of Sivagirinath? Why then didn't he take advantage of the offer? Why did the king ask for the life of the robber also? Why did he think that his sin would only be magnified if Sivagirinath were to return to life? If you know the answers and still decide to keep silent, let me warn you, your head will be blown to pieces!"

Vikram thought for a while and said, "There's nothing strange in what King Mahendravarma told Yoganath. He weighed the pros and cons of the sage's offer and only then did he

come to a decision. If Yoganath had given life to Sivagirinath, the punishment he gave to the robber would have been unjust. Besides that sin, he would have regretted that he had wasted the sage's powers. That would have been another sin. That's why he wanted both of them to be revived. When Yoganath made it clear that he had powers to revive only one life, the king withdrew his request. That was a correct decision. He was right in asking for the lives of both Sivagirinath and the robber. When he realised that it was something impossible, he did not pursue it."

The vampire knew that he had been outsmarted by King Vikramaditya. He gave him the slip and flew back to the ancient tree, taking the corpse along with him. The king drew his sword and went after the vampire.



WORLD OF SPORT

Javelin Record

Steve Backley of Britain has become the first man to throw the javelin beyond 90 metres. In Auckland, New Zealand, he threw the javelin 91.46m, improving



upon his own record of 89.58m ■ about a year ago. Backley (22), a student of sports science, has his eyes now set on the Barcelona Olympics in July-August.

Mara-thorn

Abbes Tehami of Algeria ■ a record of sorts. He was running in the Brussels (Belgium) marathon. That is, he "took over" from his coach after he had run the first 15 km of the race for his ward! Sports journalists and officials watching the race ■ that No. 62 in the lead had suddenly grown taller and was without a moustache! Not many noticed that the numbered jersey had changed hands midway. When Tehami reached the finishing line, he was cheered with jeers—instead of ■ cheque for \$7,200.

Historic

A black and white portrait of Kapil Dev, an Indian cricketer, wearing a dark cap and a light-colored shirt. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera.

India's all-rounder, Kapil Dev, has been presented with ■ unique gift—the ball with which he took his 400th Test wicket at Perth (Australia) in February. The exclusive '400-club' has now just two members, the other being Sir Richard Hadlee of New Zealand, whose tally is 431 Test wickets. Kapil is very eager to reach the 432-mark, which will give India the distinction of having both No. 1 batsman (Sunil Gavaskar—10,122 runs) and No. 1 bowler. We can only say, "Hurry up, Kapil!"



Advice Accepted

Chinnayya, a farmer living in a village near a jungle, was returning home one evening after work in the fields, when he saw a tiger caught between two trees that had grown close to each other. It was roaring in pain. He thought he should kill it before it escaped and pounced on him.

The animal, of course, was struggling to let itself free, and Chinnayya knew he would have to catch hold of the tiger to make it still so that he could aim his sickle at its neck. He managed to catch hold of its hind legs with both his hands. It was then that he realised that no hand was free to pick up the sickle.

Fortunately for him, a sanyasi came that way. "You see my predicament, O sage! I can't leave the tiger to pick up my sickle. Please take it and kill the animal for my sake."

"Oh! No!" the sanyasi excused himself. "One should not kill any living being. It's the greatest sin!"

"If you feel so," said Chinnayya, "you may at least do me this favour. Please take hold of the tiger's legs while I pick up my sickle and kill it."

The sanyasi caught hold of the animal's legs, and Chinnayya picked up his sickle. However, instead of making any attempt to kill it, he started on his way home. "Where are you going? You can't be leaving without killing the tiger!" shouted the sanyasi.

Chinnayya turned round and said, "O sage! I've accepted your advice not to kill any living being. Why should I commit a sin by killing this poor animal? Farewell!"





Beauty of Character

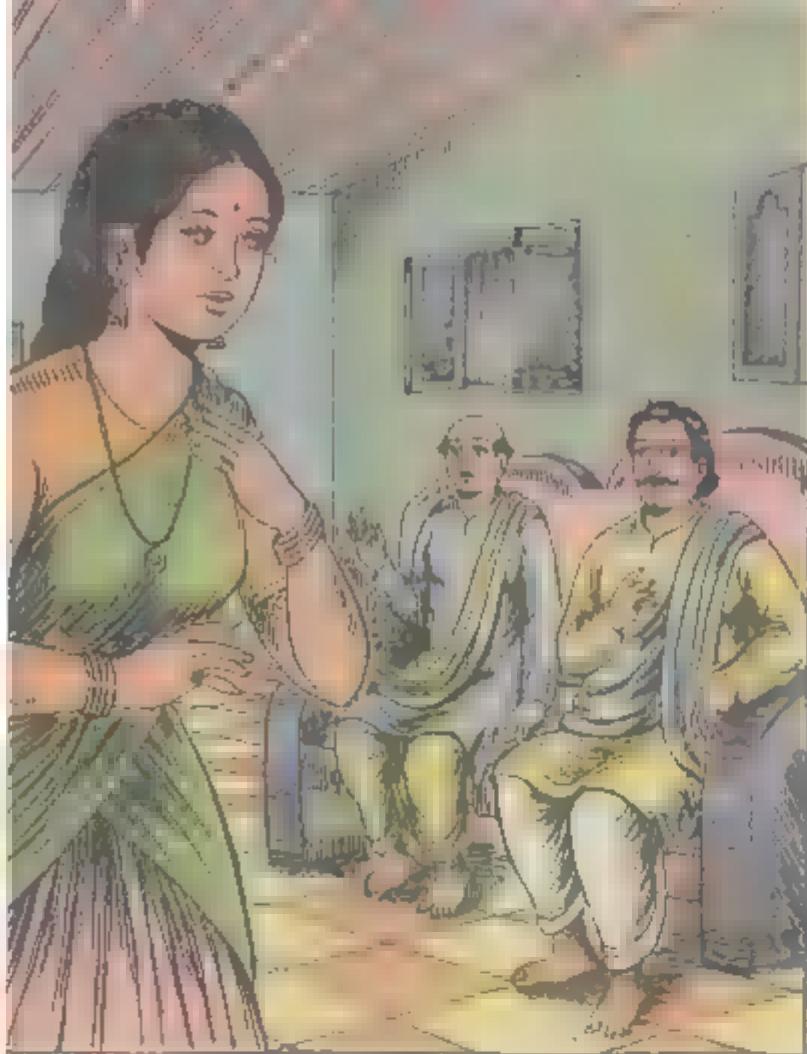
Pratap Chandra was a prominent merchant of Parvatipur. He often travelled to neighbouring countries for business purposes. Hariprasad was his boyhood friend, now engaged in trade in Ramnagar. Though living away from each other, they maintained regular contact and friendship, and helped each other in their business which prospered and they both became rich.

Pratap Chandra had a son Partha, while Hariprasad had a daughter Priya. It was time for both of them to get married. Pratap Chandra decided that he would not look for a daughter-in-law elsewhere. Priya would make an ideal bride for his son. Hari, too, contemplated on the same lines. While Priya liked Partha, he was not in favour of

marrying Priya. He thought she was not beautiful according to his standard. He mentioned this to his father and told him that he would prefer a really beautiful girl.

Pratap Chandra disclosed this to his friend and told him that his son appeared to be quite adamant. Priya happened to listen to their conversation. "Please don't worry, father. If both of you would give me permission, I shall win over his heart and make Partha marry me." Pratap and Hari gladly agreed to her suggestion.

"Whosoever I marry has to be beautiful. I'm afraid there is none around here called really beautiful," said Partha to his father when he broached the subject to his son again. "Let me go and



find out whether there are beautiful girls elsewhere. I shall then come back and tell you and you can proceed in the matter."

When Priya came to know that Partha had started off in search of a girl, she followed him dressed like a young man. They met in a village. Somehow Partha was attracted to the young man and he soon befriended him and told him what his mission was. "So you're in search of someone beautiful? We both appear to be in the same boat," remarked the young man. "But I don't care for beauty. I wanted

someone with a nice voice. And I did succeed in getting one; unfortunately, my joy was short-lived. She had some ailment in her throat and now she can't even speak. I know of a village where I remember to have seen beauty."

Partha was now interested. "Is that so? Which is this village? Would you go with me?" he asked the young man.

"Sure," said the young man. "You'll really fall for her; she is so beautiful. But she is rather poor. Her mother is running a mess. That's how they make a living."

"I'm not bothered whether they're wealthy or not, nor how they manage to live," contended Partha. "If the girl is beautiful, I shall be happy."

Soon, the two of them reached the village and arrived at the girl's house. Her mother received them and entertained them. As they were eating their food, the young man queried: "Last time I came here, I remember to have seen a girl. Where is she? Please call her; we'd like to meet her."

"I'm sorry, she has not been presenting herself to others for

the last three months. If you're so keen, I can show you her picture," said the old woman with a sigh. She went inside and came back with a picture.

On seeing the girl's portrait, Partha was struck by her beauty. "The girl is really beautiful. I've taken a vow that I shall marry only a beautiful girl, like your daughter, and I've been searching everywhere, without success. Not one girl whom I met till now is as beautiful as this one. I like her very much. Please call her. Let me meet her once, then we can decide upon our marriage."

With a sad face, the old woman said, "Is there anything in the world that can be described as permanent? Especially a woman's beauty? That doesn't remain for ever, my son. Take my daughter's case. Wait, you can see for yourself." She went inside and brought the girl where the two youngsters were sitting. Partha was dumbstruck. Was she the same as the one whose portrait he had seen just a while ago? The girl was not at all beautiful. Moreover, she had pock marks all over her face.

"Till three months ago, she



was a beautiful girl," said the woman. "Anybody would have been struck by her beauty. Suddenly, she contracted small-pox. Beauty is ephemeral, my son. What one needs is character, which is permanent. My advice to you, therefore, will be, don't be foolish by insisting on marrying a beautiful girl. Even if you get one, take it from me, her beauty will last only for a few months or years. You should, therefore, choose a girl whom you and your family know intimately, and marry her. A good-natured girl will look after you



well. Instead, if you go for a girl with beauty, she would spend all her time taking care of her beauty and nothing else. When her beauty fades, you'll begin to hate life."

The old woman's advice went deep into Partha's mind. He turned to his friend. "I've decided to return home and marry the girl my father has chosen for me. She may be lacking in beauty, but she has character." He bade farewell

to his friend and went home.

Priya, too, went back to her village and narrated how Partha had changed his attitude. Pratap Chandra was very happy when Partha went and told him that he was willing to marry Priya. A few days later, he, accompanied by his wife and son, went over to Hariprasad and decided on an auspicious date to conduct the wedding of Partha and Priya.



Sahadev : See, that man over there? He has been sitting there all day, doing nothing but wasting his time.

Jayadev : How do you know?

Sahadev : I've been watching him right from morning.

* * *

THE MASTER AND THE PUPIL

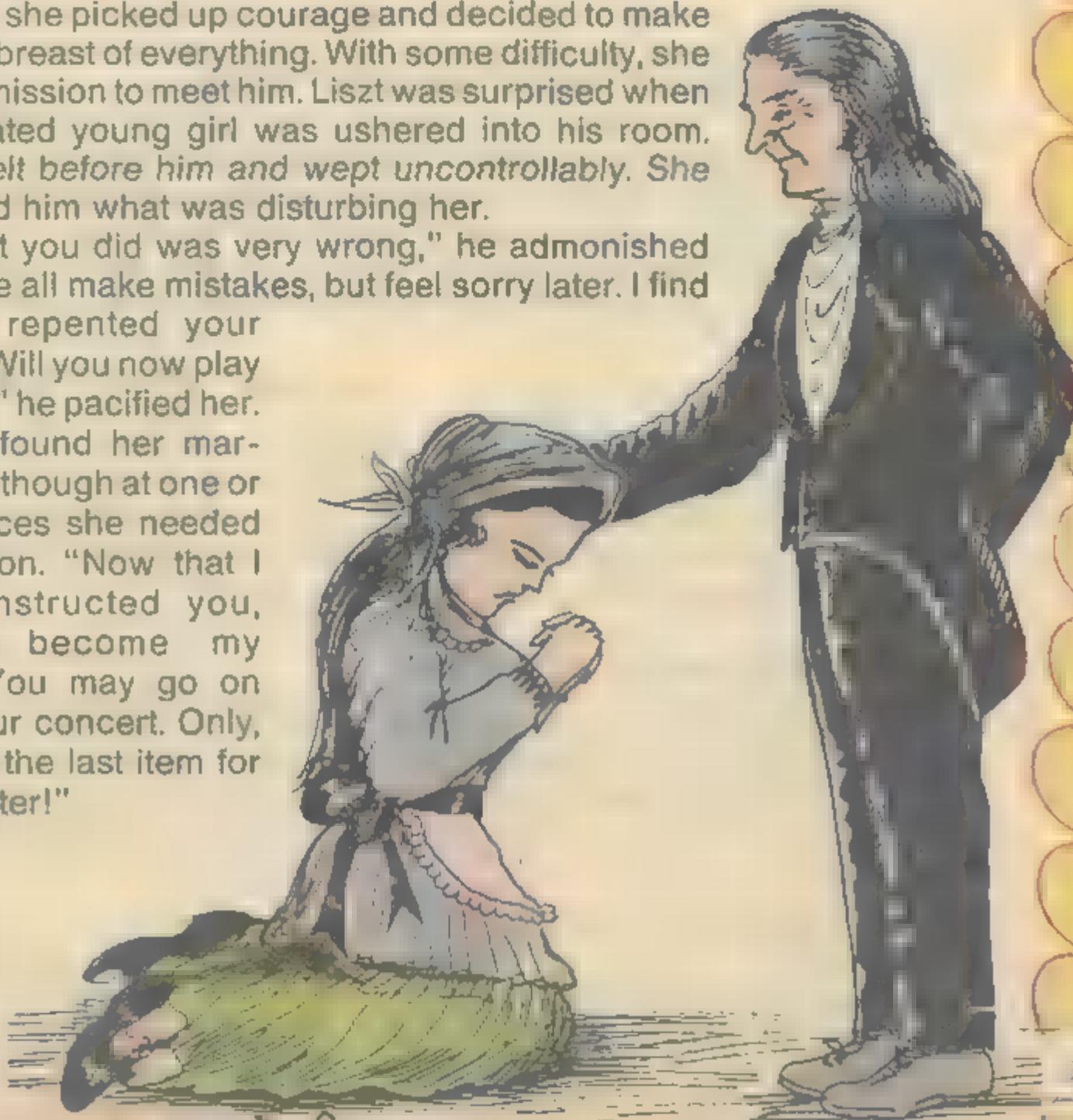
The posters plastered all over the small German town announced a forthcoming piano recital by a young girl who claimed that she was a pupil of the famous Hungarian pianist, Franz Liszt (1811-86). That was not a fact—as she had never taken lessons under him.

To her horror, a day before the recital, she heard that the great musician was very much in town. She had no doubt her deception would be found out, her recital would be spoilt, and she would have a shameless exit from the state—might be forever. She felt miserable and did not know what to do.

Later, she picked up courage and decided to make a clean breast of everything. With some difficulty, she got permission to meet him. Liszt was surprised when an agitated young girl was ushered into his room. She knelt before him and wept uncontrollably. She then told him what was disturbing her.

"What you did was very wrong," he admonished her. "We all make mistakes, but feel sorry later. I find you've repented your action. Will you now play for me?" he pacified her.

Liszt found her marvellous, though at one or two places she needed correction. "Now that I have instructed you, you've become my pupil! You may go on with your concert. Only, reserve the last item for the master!"





LET US KNOW

Which is the largest populated country in the world?

—C. Sulhersan, *Bombay*

With a population of over 1,072 million, China is the country with the largest population. By 2,000 A.D., this is expected to reach 1,280 million. In size, China is the second largest, after Canada. Till its break-up last year, the Soviet Union was the largest.

How do we get petrol?

—Ashley L. Mendonca, *Andheri*

Petrol or gasoline is a mixture of hydrocarbons derived from petroleum. Colourless and highly inflammable, it is mainly used as fuel for internal combustion engines, like in motor vehicles. Petroleum is the crude mineral oil found underground. Products like gasoline and kerosene are made from petroleum by distillation and other refining processes.

Who invented the mechanical typewriter?

—Sriram Narayan, *Ghatkopar*

The first practicable typewriter was built by Sholes, Glidden, and Soule of Milwaukee, U.S.A., in 1867. In 1874, Remington & Sons, famous gun-makers, produced the first machines for sale.

■■■■■ included in the expression Seven Seas?

—D. Valdehi, *Ramanathapuram*

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PICKS FROM THE WISE

If you ever tell your secret to your friend, you will never fear him when he becomes your enemy.

- *Menander*

Humble love, and not proud science, keeps the door of heaven.

- *Young*

It may be those who do most, dream most.

- *Stephen Peacock*



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